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SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

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A SOIL SURVEY

Can Help A Lot. After much thought and planning, you proudly watch the contractor break ground for the basement of your new house. Three feet down he hits bedrock. You now have some more planning to do. Do you blast out a basement? Do you build without a basement? Do you build a basement for very short people? A soil survey, available from USDA's Soil Conservation Service, would have alerted you to the shallow soil, along with any other soil-related hazards or limitations that might effect your home site. A house you plan to buy or a lot on which you plan to build is a big investment. Unsuspected soil hazards can cause serious damage and lead to major expense -- from flooding or other water damage to slipping soils to soil erosion. The Soil Conservation Service recently prepared two brochures that explain how soil surveys can serve as a tool in your home buying or home building plans. They answer questions on what a soil survey is and does, and tell you how to get information on surveys in your area. Single free copies of "Soil Surveys Can Help You" (PA-1054) and "Homebuyers -- Soil Surveys Can Help You" (PA-1050) are available from the Information Division, Room 6110-S, Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Additional copies are 25 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

INFORMATION COMING

Under Separate Cover. Readers of SERVICE will soon be receiving a series of six booklets on the U.S. international agricultural trade and its importance to the nation's economy. The booklets, recently issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, discuss such topics as what makes U.S. farm trade grow; what our farm exports mean to the world; who buys our farm products; what farm exports mean to you; how farm exports have grown; and the world food situation. Additional sets of the booklets are available free from Special Reports Division, Room 459-A, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

ROCK HART SECTION
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS



PLAY THE NUTRITION GAME

It's Good For You. As experienced teachers know, games can be effective teaching tools. With this thought as a guide, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service has developed "The 4 Food Groups For Better Meals Game," a nutrition education teaching tool. The game is similar to the game of Bingo with the four food groups -- milk, meat, vegetable-fruit and bread-cereal -- as headings on the playing cards. It is suitable for almost any age group. Included in the game packet are 25 game cards, call numbers, a Daily Food Guide poster, a list of some foods according to the food groups, and a sheet of instructions and suggestions on using the game in a learning session. Single free game packets are available on request from teachers, Extension aides, community health directors, and other persons teaching nutrition education classes or directing training programs. Write to Nutrition and Technical Services Staff, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

CLASSIC RECIPES

From Creative Cooks. For several years USDA's Food and Nutrition Service has collected recipes from participants and cooperators in its Family Feeding Programs. These recipes offer very special and creative ways for using low-cost ingredients in a variety of ways. Recently FNS collected more than 100 of the recipes into a booklet, "Favorite American Recipes: A Collection of Classics from Around the Country." The recipes are truly classics, ranging from Czechoslovakian Soup, Chicken Gumbo, and Guacamole to Gnocchi, Maple Apple Pie, and Sopapillas. FNS points out that the recipes are not USDA-tested; however, they do bear the test of time. For years they have graced the tables of many great cooks who contributed to the collection. Copies of "Favorite American Recipes" (FNS-109) are available for \$1.05 each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

THE COMMON CONEFLOWER

Has Uncommonly Useful Roots. American Indians, and later pharmacists, used extracts of the coneflower for antiseptic, analgesic, and other medicinal purposes. Recently, scientists of USDA's Agricultural Research Service discovered something else about this common weed and member of the thistle family. Its roots are a veritable insecticide cornucopia. The scientists have isolated one unusual compound from the coneflower root that mimics an insect hormone. The extremely potent ingredient inhibits the growth and development of the yellow mealworm, a pest of stored flour, grain, and other food products. Another compound from the coneflower root killed not only yellow mealworms, but was deadly to house flies, mosquito larvae, and German cockroaches. The scientists isolated still another compound that inhibited two types of cancer. Although not highly active, the third compound may lead to synthesis of other, more potent chemicals. Wonder if the Indians knew?

VISUAL FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT FOOD

In USDA Slide Sets and Filmstrips. Food prices, food production, food supplies, food availability -- one or all of these are likely to come up in almost every conversation, news report, club program, or classroom discussion nowadays. All of these various aspects of the farm/food story are complex and can be confusing both to understand and to explain. Teachers, program directors, speakers, and anyone taking on the job of explaining the current food situation will be interested in several slide sets and filmstrips available from the USDA. Following is a list and brief description of visual presentations -- some new; some older -- that can help make the task easier:

The Real Facts About Food, revision of the slide set, "What's Happening to Food Prices," gives current facts and figures to provide an understanding of what's happening on the farm -- and around the world -- to push up the food bill. 159 frames, color. Slide set \$15.00. Filmstrip \$10.50. Prices include 50 copies of a companion publication, soundtrack on cassette and two copies of an illustrated narrative guide. New Presentation.

The World Food Situation depicts by trendlines and bar charts the world food production, past, present, and future. Particular emphasis is given to production of the major grains -- wheat, corn, soybeans, and feed grains. 22 frames, color. Slide set with two narrative guides \$10.00. New.

The Peaceful Revolutionists explains the role farmers and others in the agricultural complex have played in freeing most Americans from the need to grow their own food. 195 frames, color. Slide set \$50. Filmstrip \$20. Narrative guides and cassette.

Revelations of a Register Tape tells what influences the family grocery bill. 71 frames, color. Slide set \$18.50. Filmstrip \$10.50. Narrative guide and cassette.

The \$150 Billion Food Assembly Line gives a quick tour of the people and businesses that make up our food pipeline. 58 frames, color. Slide set \$17. Filmstrip \$8.50. Narrative guides and cassette.

Fuel For Food explains why the fuel needs of the farmer are so critical and so important to you. 94 frames, color. Slide set \$25. Filmstrip \$11.50. Narrative guides and cassette.

Agriculture USA shows some of the complexities of modern agriculture and its national and international importance. 137 frames, color. Slide sets \$35. Filmstrip \$18. Prices include 25 copies of a companion publication, narrative guides, and cassettes.

Agricultural Charts, the annual "Handbook of Agricultural Charts" in slide form. The 1974 set of 195 color slides, \$10.00.

Slide sets can be ordered from Photography Division, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Filmstrips are available from Photo Lab, Inc., 3825 Georgia Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011.

KNOW YOUR MOBILE

Whether Staying Put Or Moving On. Mobile homes do not necessarily have wheels and move around...but they can and they might. They are not to be confused with travel trailers, which are primarily for recreation. Indeed, once delivered to a site -- a private lot or a mobile home park -- most mobile homes stay put. They are permanent residences, constructed much like conventional houses but retaining the capability of being moved more easily than conventional houses. While this type of housing is not for everyone, the number of Americans living in mobile homes increased from six to nine million in the last two years. The growing use of mobile homes prompted USDA's Extension Service to develop a new slide presentation for potential mobile home purchasers. "Selecting and Buying A Mobile Home" provides facts on construction standards, appearance, family space requirements, and care and maintenance. Among its many useful tips is information on choosing and maintaining the site for a mobile home. The slide set is available for \$25 from Photography Division, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. A filmstrip version may be ordered for \$17 from Photo Lab, Inc., 3825 Georgia Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011. The price include two narrative guides and a cassette with soundtrack.

STARCHED PLASTICS

They Don't Last. How could we ever get along without plastics? Especially those marvelous items that can be used once and then tossed out. But for all their handy disposability, most plastics do not decompose easily and are hard to lose. They keep coming back to haunt us, decorating roadsides, shorelines, picnic areas and trash dumps. Even burning is not the solution since some plastics release toxic compounds when burned. Corn starch may be the answer. Scientists of USDA's Agricultural Research Service have developed new, more degradable plastics by adding corn starch to the formulas for polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and polyvinyl alcohol (PVA), two widely used synthetics. The biodegradable starch in the new formulas can be attacked by biological agents, thus aiding in the breakdown of the total product. Besides reducing litter pollution, the starch can stretch the supplies of petroleum-based raw materials for plastics, a notable advantage in view of the petroleum shortage. Commercial production of the plastics has not started, but USDA scientists envision that starch-PVC could be formed into trays, eating utensils, packaging materials and other disposable items. The starch-PVA could be used in thin films for mulching vegetable crops.

A MULTITUDE OF PRODUCTS

According to USDA's Forest Service, there are some 5,000 products other than lumber, plywood and wood pulp derived from forests. Among these are cellophane, rayon, soap, resin, turpentine, perfume, chewing gum, photographic film, and shatterproof glass.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Lillie Vincent, Editor of SERVICE, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Telephone (202) 447-5437.
